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African plants

Under the title *Die Blütenpflanzen Afrikas*,⁵ Dr. FRANZ THONNER, after listing the chief botanical works and directing attention to some of the more scattered literature pertaining to the flora of Africa and supplying a detailed table of contents, gives a convenient key to the determination of the families of African flowering plants; then he presents the main body of the work, namely a key for the determination of the genera, which occupies about 540 pages. The text is supplemented by 150 plates, and a map indicating the floral regions and provinces of the continent.

Each family is described as to the essential and most striking characters and is represented, moreover, by a full page illustration of a characteristic genus; the number of genera and species of each family, so far as it occurs in Africa, is mentioned. Furthermore, the number of species in each genus and their geographical distribution is indicated.

The author presents no bibliography in connection with the text, and there is comparatively little in the way of synonymy; it is, however, definitely stated in the introduction that the limitations of families and genera are in accordance with ENGLER and PRANTL'S *Die natürlichen Pflanzenfamilien* and DALLA TORRE and HARMS'S *Genera Siphonogamarum*, so that for critical identification it will be necessary to use the book largely in connection with these and other important works of reference.

The keys are ingeniously arranged, well contrasted, and lucid; the illustrations are clear and advantageously portray the general and detailed characters of the plant, and well represent the different families. The volume also contains a carefully prepared comparative table giving the number of families, genera, and species as well as their general geographical distribution; it also contains a glossary, a list of botanical authors, and a useful catalogue of the common African plant-names associated with the proper scientific name.

On the whole the work brings together in an epitomized form and in a single volume much information concerning the flora of Africa that hitherto has been scattered through many different volumes; hence it is a work which will be of great practical use both in the herbarium and in the field.—J. M. GREENMAN.

MINOR NOTICES

Das Pflanzenreich.⁶—Part 36 consists of a monographic treatment of the Nepenthaceae by the well-known writer and authority on insectivorous plants, Professor J. M. MACFARLANE. An excellent general account of the family, following the usual sequence of this series, precedes the taxonomic consideration

⁵ THONNER, FRANZ, *Die Blütenpflanzen Afrikas: eine Anleitung zum Bestimmen der Gattungen der afrikanischen Siphonogamen.* pp. xvi + 673. *pls. 150. 1 map. M 10 (12).* Berlin: Friedländer & Sohn. 1908.

⁶ ENGLER, A., *Das Pflanzenreich. Heft 36 (iv. 111). Nepenthaceae von J. M. MACFARLANE.* pp. 92. *figs. 19 (95).* Leipzig: Wilhelm Engelmann. 1908. *M 4.60.*